



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

SEP 25 2013

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

Jeff Seefeldt
District Ranger, Lakewood-Laona Ranger District
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest
15085 State Road 32
Lakewood, Wisconsin 54138

Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement, Lakewood Southeast Vegetation and Transportation Management Project, Lakewood-Laona Ranger District, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, Oconto County, Wisconsin - CEQ #20130258

Dear Mr. Seefeldt:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the above-mentioned project. Our comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) proposed alternatives to address the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest 2004 Land and Resource Management Plan and move forest resources toward the desired future conditions for the Management Areas located in the Lakewood Southeast project area.

USFS has selected to implement Alternative 3. The selected alternative is considered to be the best alternative for restoring northern dry forests and pine barrens. It has the least amount of new road construction and will create a better habitat balance for hawk species.

EPA provided comments on the Draft EIS on November 20, 2012. We requested clarification on why new roads were proposed adjacent to roads scheduled for decommissioning. EPA notes that the selected alternative no longer includes several of these instances, resulting in a decrease in impacts.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the Final EIS and ROD. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Poole of my staff at (312) 353-2087 or poole.elizabeth@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth A. Westlake". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Cc: Marilee Houlter, District NEPA Coordinator
Jim McDonald, Regional Environmental Coordinator